

## Alexander Cochrane to Andrew Jackson, February 12, 1815, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### VICE-ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER COCHRANE TO JACKSON.

His Britannic Majesty's Ship Tonnant, off Mobile Bay, February 12, 1815.

*Sir:* In consequence of the style which Captain Patterson thought proper to adopt in a Letter that he addressed to me on the 23rd January<sup>1</sup> (a copy of which I beg leave to enclose, with some remarks upon the margin) I find myself precluded from making him any reply thereto, or of holding with that Officer any further correspondence.

<sup>1</sup> Commodore Patterson's letter of Jan. 23, with Vice-Admiral Cochrane's comments, is in the Jackson MSS. The reader will probably conclude that the commodore was unduly sensitive. He charged the vice-admiral with "want of respect" to the American flag of truce sent forward to negotiate the exchange of prisoners and with discourtesy to the officers who carried it. At the same time, the American commander had not gone to such lengths as should cause his opponent to refuse to negotiate with him. The present letter was printed in Latour, app., p. lxxxiii.

But to prevent our respective Prisoners suffering any unnecessary detention, I do myself the honor to communicate to you: that in order to fulfill the agreement for an Exchange of Prisoners entered into by Major Smith (aid de camp to Major General Lambert); upon the 27th Ultimo I sent His Majesty's Ship Nymphé to the Havanna to receive from His Majesty's Ship Ramillies the One hundred of the American Prisoners taken in the Gun Vessels, which she had carried to Sea.

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These with five Seamen, who for the purpose of being examined in the Vice Admiralty Court respecting the capture of the Gun Vessels, 13 I have been obliged to send to Bermuda, but who are to be returned the moment the legal forms have been complied with, will complete the number of American Prisoners which have to be accounted for by the British Forces under the agreement of the 17th Ultimo; and they shall be forwarded to you without any delay, so soon as they arrive in the Squadron.

As it has been found very inconvenient, the sending of Vessels to the Rigolets (those last sent not having yet returned, and are reported to be on shore) Colonel Livingston and myself have agreed that the Prisoners expected in the *Nymph* shall proceed to the mouth of the Mississippi, and be delivered to the Officer commanding at Fort Plaquemine.

Having by this arrangement fulfilled the stipulations of our beforementioned treaty in which we agreed to the restoration of all the Prisoners that our Forces had made before we received from you any British Prisoners, it is but just that you should follow the same principle with respect to the Prisoners who have fallen into our hands by the surrender of Fort Bowyer;<sup>2</sup> all of whom Major General Lambert and myself are ready to exchange as they stand upon the Lists (copies of which are enclosed) for such British Prisoners as you may cause to be delivered at the mouth of the Mississippi, after the first account has been finally settled, and on my part I will engage to send to the same place an equivalent of American Prisoners the number and qualities of the British Prisoners received.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Lawrence surrendered Fort Bowyer Feb. 11, 1815, with 366 prisoners. His report to Jackson of the occurrence, Feb. 12, 1815, is as follows:

“ *Sir*, Imperious necessity has compelled me to enter into articles of Capitulation with Major Genl. John Lambert Comdg. his B M Forces in front of Fort Bowyer a copy of which I forward you for the purpose of effecting an immediate exchange of Prisoners Nothing but the want of Provision and finding myself completely surrounded by thousand Batteries erected on the Sand Mounds which completely commanded the Fort and the Enemy having

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advanced by regular approaches within thirty yards of the Ditch and the utter impossibility of getting any assistance or supplies could have induced me to adopt this measure feeling confident and it being the unanimous opinion of the officers that we could not retain the Post and that the lives of many valuable Officers and Soldiers would have been uselessly sacrificed I thought it most advisable to adopt this plan a full and correct statement will be furnished you as early as possible. Captain Chambelain who bears this to E Livingston Esqr. will relate to him many particulars, which will I hope be satisfactory.”

I have the honor to be Sir,